

BEWARE OF PHONY GOVERNMENT GRANTS

A new wave of fraudulent telephone calls is currently sweeping across Pennsylvania.

Callers, who claim to be associated with the United States Government, tell you that you have been awarded a substantial government grant. After confirming your name and mailing address, the caller requests the name of your bank, the routing number of your bank, and your personal account number in order to withdraw a “processing fee.”

Of course, there is no government grant. The person or company that called you will most likely drain your bank account of all your hard-earned money and take off...never to be heard from again.

Here are some easy ways to spot this scam and others like it:

- **Beware of callers who claim that you have been awarded a government grant** – grants are only provided to people and organizations that meet specific guidelines and complete the application process. Remember that people generally will not call to offer you money.
- **Never send money to “verify,” “guarantee,” or “process” your alleged grant** – requests for up-front fees are a sure sign of a scam.
- **Never provide personal financial information or your Social Security Number** – this type of information, when in the wrong hands, can be used to steal your identity and your money.
- **Always ask for information in writing** – if the grant is legitimate, the caller will not have a problem sending you the information in writing.
- **Always trust your instincts** – like the old saying goes: “if an offer is too good to be true, it probably is.”

This type of fraud is becoming a major problem across the Commonwealth and the nation. The best way to fight this alarming trend is to report any such calls to authorities immediately.

If you have been a victim of a similar scam, have any questions, or wish to file a complaint, please contact the Attorney General’s Bureau of Consumer Protection at 1-800-441-2555 or log on to www.attorneygeneral.gov.